

How do I GET STARTED?

Simple.

Stop bagging your grass. Stop hauling loads of leaves to the curb. Instead, build or buy a compost bin for your backyard and dump that yard waste in the bin.

The compost area should be level, out-of-the-way and accessible. Your bin should be big enough to hold a pile 3 to 5 feet across and 3 to 5 feet high.

Make sure you chop or shred very coarse or stringy materials. Alternate brown and green materials.

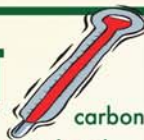
Moisten each layer with water, leaving a slight depression in the middle.

Place kitchen scraps deep within the pile to avoid attracting animals and flies. Turn the material periodically.



FEEL THE HEAT

A compost pile with a proper carbon to nitrogen ratio will burn your hand — about 130 degrees Fahrenheit.



WHAT IS COMPOST USED FOR?

It's a great alternative for commercial mulch. Instead of buying wood chips or other mulches, you can spread compost over the soil. Like any good mulch, it will conserve water, reduce weeds and keep soil temperatures from becoming too hot or too cold.

BUT I WANT MY GARDEN TO SMELL GOOD

No problem.

Compost has an earthy smell, not a bad odor. If your compost pile smells bad, it's a sign the compost isn't getting enough air.

Turn it over.



For more information on our environment, contact:

Kansas Department of Health and Environment,
Bureau of Waste Management
785-296-1600

KDSI website
www.kansasdontspoilit.com

KDSI hotline 800-282-9790

Kansas Business and Industry Recycling Program, Inc. (BIRP)
785-273-6808

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Solid Waste Hotline
800-424-9346
(For general environmental information, press 1)
TDD 800-553-7672

HOME COMPOSTING

**KANSAS
DON'T SPOIL IT!**

Printed on recycled paper

Turn a shovel of Kansas soil and you can find anything from red clay to sand. But there's an easy way to enrich that soil and help your garden and landscape plants grow. Compost.

WHAT'S COMPOST?

Compost is a useful form of dark, crumbly, decomposing organic material such as fallen leaves, grass clippings and vegetable scraps.



Many of the minerals found in compost are valuable plant nutrients that enrich the soil and promote plant growth.

WHY COMPOST?

Composting can help you save time and money.

It's faster than bagging grass and hauling trash; cheaper than buying chemical fertilizer.

It will help your garden grow.

And it'll make you feel good to help the environment.

YOU CAN COMPOST

- Grass clippings and fallen leaves
- Flowers and Weeds
- Old plants and potting soil
- Twigs, wood chips and sawdust
- Vegetable and fruit scraps
- Bread and grains
- Coffee filters, grounds, tea bags
- Egg shells and nut shells



BUT DON'T COMPOST

- Meat, fish and dairy products
- Cooking oil or oily foods
- Insect-infested plants, or plants susceptible to disease
- Weeds that spread by runners, such as morning glory, bind-weed or bermuda grass
- Pet feces
- Large branches
- Pressure-treated, painted or preserved lumber



WHEN WILL THE COMPOST BE READY?

Like fine wine, robust cheese and some people, compost can improve with age. However, the stability of the compost depends on the rate of decomposition; that, in turn, depends on a variety of factors, including nutrient balance, mixing, moisture and aeration. Holding bins will produce compost in 6 months to 2 years. Turning bins create usable compost in a shorter period of time.



EVERYONE CAN TAKE PART

If you don't have an outdoor garden, you can still use compost, mixing it with potting soil to strengthen houseplants and planter box gardens.

And, even if you aren't able to start a compost pile of your own, you can support the environment by using compost instead of chemical fertilizers. Your purchase

will help stimulate the market and promote recycling and resource recovery.



THE BENEFITS ARE CLEAR

Clear water. Clear skies. Composting is a simple way to improve the Kansas environment.

- Using compost rather than chemical fertilizers reduces nitrogen runoff and protects our waterways.
- Compost conserves water by loosening clay soils and binding sandy soils.
- Composting eliminates air pollution and fire hazards associated with burning yard wastes.
- Compost stimulates plant growth while protecting the landscape against weather extremes.

By creating a healthier soil ecosystem, compost does much more than help your garden grow.

It also enhances the soil food chain and supports the wildlife that depends on that food chain for sustenance.

